

The embodiments of the invention in which an exclusive property or privilege is claimed are defined as follows:

1. A method for preparing individualized, glyoxal crosslinked cellulosic fibers having color characterized by an *L* value greater than about 92, comprising:

(a) applying only an aqueous glyoxal solution to a cellulosic fibrous web to provide a web of treated fibers;

(b) separating the web of treated fibers into individual treated fibers; and

(c) heating the individual treated fibers at a temperature and for a time sufficient to provide individualized, crosslinked cellulosic fibers having color characterized by an *L* value greater than about 92.

2. The method of Claim 1, wherein the glyoxal is applied in an amount from about 0.5 to about 5 percent by weight based on the total weight of fibers.

3. The method of Claim 1, wherein the glyoxal is applied in an amount from about 1 to about 4 percent by weight based on the weight of fibers.

4. The method of Claim 1, wherein the temperature is from about 120°C to about 165°C.

5. The method of Claim 1, wherein the time is from about 1 to about 20 minutes.

6. The method of Claim 1, wherein the crosslinked fibers have an *a* value greater than about -2.3 and less than about +0.2.

7. The method of Claim 1, wherein the crosslinked fibers have a *b* value less than about 7.5.

8. The method of Claim 1, wherein the *L* value is greater than about 95.

9. The method of Claim 1, wherein the crosslinked fibers have a brightness greater than about 80% ISO.

10. The method of Claim 1, wherein the crosslinked fibers have a brightness greater than about 85% ISO.